

Work/life balance is critical for employees' health

by Gabby Christensen

Balancing work and life isn't always easy, but young professionals say advocating for workplace benefits that promote balance can make it easier to tackle busy work schedules and make time for leisure, too.



Kelsey Haswell, lean improvement specialist at Methodist Health System and chair of the Greater Omaha YP Council, said many times benefits are intangible.

"As a young professional, I have found a work culture that is

a strong fit to my personal mission, leadership who support my development both within my company and out in the community, and teammates who support my personal well-being," Haswell said. "Without this level of support, it would be difficult to be an authentic leader and successful professional striving to balance all of my priorities."

Not only is it important to prioritize leisure as a young professional, but she said it's also important to prioritize growth.

"Life is far too short to not prioritize what matters most in your life, and you will be a better professional by taking care of your well-being," Haswell said.

Mindy Kidney, chair of the Omaha Area Board of Realtors Young Professionals Network, said choosing to work at a company that offers systems and support is becoming more attractive to independent contractors.

"It's important that we are protective of the

times we make ourselves available to our clients and leave time for family, friends and taking care of our whole person through faith, activity or community service," Kidney said. "I encourage independent contractors to set expectations with their clients of times they can expect to reach them, the typical timeframe of their responses as well as letting them know if there are days they are off."

She said it's also important to remember that while it can be tempting to work with anyone who reaches out, it's not always the right decision.

"Trust your gut and refer it out, if needed," Kidney said. "Save yourself unnecessary stress so you can be the best version of yourself to your

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McNamara



Kerri Palmesano, president of Junior League of Omaha.

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clients who love and respect you.”

As an attorney that has worked for the government and as corporate in-house prior to joining a law firm, Kate McNamara, president of the Academy of Young Professionals in Omaha and shareholder at Fraser Stryker PC LLO, said a sought-after workplace benefit is a flexible schedule.

“Most attorneys recognize that our profession is not a 9-to-5 job and there are weeks where we need to work 100 hours, and weeks where we can take a little breather,” McNamara said. “Having the flexibility to work a little less during those ‘less crazy’ times is a huge benefit to help restore mental health and promote work/life balance.”

She said one way to foster this balance is to take time off when given the chance.

“Also, by setting daily goals for yourself, and getting those things done, you’ll feel a sense of accomplishment and will feel less guilty about taking the time to relax,” McNamara said.

As a teacher, Kerri Palmesano, president of the Junior League of Omaha, said one of the greatest benefits is a full coverage health care plan.

She said other attractive benefits include flexible scheduling and employers understanding life-changing events.

“Workplaces with gyms and day care are also conducive to a healthy work/life balance,” Palmesano said. “Not all workplaces are able to provide those attractive amenities; however, I think the most important benefits are having passion for the work you do, a sense of belonging to the company you work for, knowing you have opportunity to grow and feeling like a valued employee. When you feel those things, you enjoy work. You then have the positive energy to meet friends and family, go on new adventures, start new hobbies and make time for giving back to the community.”